

January 6, 2005

EI-1341

3980 FM 2676
Hondo, Texas 78861

Surface Transportation Board
Case Control Unit
1925 K Street, NW
Washington, DC 20423-0001

Attention: Rini Ghosh

Re: Finance Docket No. 34284

*received
1/11/05*

Dear Ms. Ghosh:

I believe Vulcan's proposed quarry and the proposed SGR rail line, regardless of where the railroad is constructed, are connected actions, and should be studied in the same Environmental Impact Statement. The rail study has already been completed but the earlier quarry study was so incomplete it seemed no one even put foot on the ground. There must be a broader study of the quarry area to learn of the true environmental impacts the quarry will have.

I, Judy Dittmar, as a concerned landowner along with my husband and son, and a Director of Medina County Environmental Action Association, would like to voice my fears of the Vulcan Materials proposed quarry and rail construction.

We would like to say first that it is beyond us how someone, for their own personal gain-no one else's, has planned to break up one or possibly both our plots of land without so much as speaking to us. We have never, at any time, been spoken to by a Vulcan representative regarding their plan to create such destruction to our property and it's use.

This proposed quarry and rail aims to destroy our peaceful community, as it is now, through air and water pollution and creating a deadly traffic situation. Many generations have been enjoying a peaceful rural life; and, new people have come here to escape just such environmental issues as we are now facing.

Our major concern is the possible contamination of the Edwards Aquifer. This is everyone's source of water including one of the largest cities in Texas, San Antonio. The proposed quarry sight is on the Aquifer and the possible

contamination from the rail cars is much too close to the Aquifer. There are caves, sink holes, fault line veins, etc., which can carry this contamination right into our water source.

I speak of my own farm where land use is concerned. We have a small farm. Our son, wife, and new baby, soon to be two, live on the farm in the approximately 70 year old home (I feel this is one of the two homes they mentioned being in path area of their proposed rail). We have tried to set up somewhat of a grass and grazing pattern, and, even installed a pipeline for better distribution of grazing, as an attempt to prevent soil erosion and provide cleaner air. Our farm is very near the proposed quarry site (on CR 353, south and west of the intersection of CR 353 and 354) and the beginning of the proposed rail which will cut right through the best part of the farm and within a few hundred feet of the house, water well (our only source of water), and pipeline. Cutting the farm as it does will mean starting over with our erosion control practices and this is far too expensive. Our son, James and his wife Donna have also purchased the adjoining (on west side) 50 acres. A few hundred feet on the other side of the house is County Road 353, a gravel road which will carry the traffic, including, possibly over a hundred trucks a day to and from the proposed quarry loading area, headquarters, and designated delivery points. This will create a dangerous air pollution situation and also a dangerous entrance situation, not to mention the children's play area will be diminished to nothing. The same will be the case wherever this proposed railroad goes.

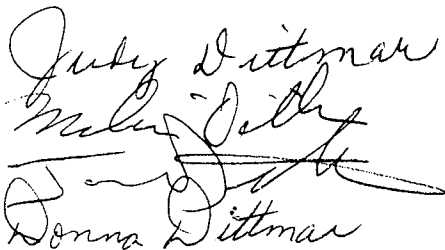
There is mass travel on the two larger roadways to be crossed by the proposed surface rail (State Highway 2676 and County Road 4516). This proposed rail will detain all concerned—fire trucks, ambulances, emergency law officers, school buses, and many, many people going to work to and from San Antonio and other area points. Contrary to what news people have reported (taken from people who do not live here), there is a tremendous amount of traffic on these roads. We must be assured that we will have above grade crossings so our emergency and bus travel will not be interrupted. Again, how can someone just take our land and not even assure our safety because it costs too much? Is Vulcan saying our lives are not worth their dollars?

Flooding is a huge concern since my husband and I live in Quihi where two of the larger creeks meet. If the rail, which runs almost entirely through the flood plain, is not constructed correctly, or the quarry is not designed correctly, we, about 35 historical sites and homes, church, cemeteries—all will be severely damaged by flood waters. We do not feel this is a chance that should be taken. In recent years we have been trapped in our home by floodwater—the first time in the 40 years we live here. You can see what would happen if water was diverted from the quarry or blocked by the rail.

Wildlife must be protected. This is one of the reasons for living in a rural area, and, hunting has also become, in many cases, a necessary form of income. We have the farm on CR353 and use of hunting property on FM2676.

Who am I to stop progress? This is one company's progress. To us it is disaster-a danger threat to the whole area. Why put a railroad through creeks and through the flood zone and historical area? If the quarry is built, just move the railroad so as to not threaten so many lives, homes, and history.

I do hope that our concerns will show the need for a broader study of the quarry as a connected action to the rail and result in an environmentally and physically safe area for us to live.

Three handwritten signatures are stacked vertically. The top signature is 'Judy Dittmar', the middle is 'Melvin Dittmar', and the bottom is 'Donna Dittmar'.

Melvin and Judy Dittmar, Landowners
Judy Dittmar, Director, MCEAA
James and Donna Dittmar, Landowners

cc: U.S. Congressman Henry Bonilla
U.S. Senator John Cornyn
Texas Senator Frank Madla
Medina County Judge Jim Barden
Senator Kay Bailey Hutchison